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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	COR-01	ACDA-17	AID-01	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01
	DODE-00	EB-01	HA-09	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	IO-19
	LAB-04	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	PA-01	PM-02	PRS-01	P-01	SIL-00	SNP-00	SP-00
	SR-00	SS-00	STR-17	TRSE-00	T-01	RPE-00	/086W

-----828196 051634Z /45/38

O 011606Z DEC 92  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5827  
USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9081  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE

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CORRECTED COPY - TEXT

STATE FOR ARA/AND AND ARA/P

USIA FOR AR

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, VE

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

ON NOVEMBER 27 COUP ATTEMPT AFTERMATH

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1. SUMMARY: [REDACTED]

ON

NOVEMBER 30 TO DISCUSS THE EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 27 AND  
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THEIR AFTERMATH WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON VENEZUELAN  
MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE COUP ATTEMPT. [REDACTED]  
THAT NORMALCY HAD RETURNED AND THAT PRESIDENT CARLOS  
ANDRES PEREZ (CAP) HAS RESUMED HIS USUAL HEAVY WORK  
SCHEDULE. CAP WILL HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE ON DECEMBER  
1 FOR REPORTERS REPRESENTING FOREIGN MEDIA  
ORGANIZATIONS FOLLOWED BY A LUNCH AT THE CARACAS HILTON  
TO PERMIT DISCUSSION IN A MORE INFORMAL SETTING.  
[REDACTED] UPBEAT AND CONVEYED OPTIMISM THAT THE MAIN  
COUP LEADERS HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AND THAT THE DECISION

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON  
DATE/CASE ID: 19 OCT 2006 200503206

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TO HAVE A MILITARY TRIAL FOR THE ARRESTED MILITARY OFFICIALS WOULD RESULT IN PROMPT, EFFICIENT JUSTICE AND A DETERRENT TO OTHER MILITARY FIGURES CONTEMPLATING COUP-LIKE ACTIVITIES. HE WAS CONCERNED WITH VENEZUELA'S IMAGE ABROAD AND SOUGHT IDEAS FROM THE EMBASSY ON WHAT COULD BE DONE VIS-A-VIS THE AMERICAN MEDIA TO PRESENT A "BALANCED" IMAGE OF VENEZUELA'S SITUATION. HE EXPECTED THAT CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES WILL BE RELAXED OR TOTALLY REMOVED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS BOTH TO DEMONSTRATE STABILITY AND TO ALLOW THE CURRENT MAYORAL/GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN TO PROCEED AS NORMALLY AS POSSIBLE. LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES STILL NEEDED THE ABILITY TO SEARCH HOMES FOR SUBVERSIVES AND WEAPONS AND THEREFORE THIS GUARANTEE MIGHT REMAIN SUSPENDED FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD.

[REDACTED] THAT THE MEDIA, AS A WHOLE, DID A REASONABLE JOB OF OBJECTIVE COVERAGE OF THE COUP ATTEMPT THOUGH HE BEMOANED THE LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM AND LEFTIST SLANT OF VENEZUELAN JOURNALISTS IN GENERAL. CENSORS WILL NOT BE SENT TO MEDIA OFFICES SINCE THE GOV LEARNED THE PAINFUL LESSON OF DOMESTIC AND

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INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM WHEN THEY DEPLOYED CENSORS AFTER FEBRUARY 4. [REDACTED] THE VOTE ON DECEMBER 6 WILL BE GREATER THAN ANTICIPATED BUT AD CANDIDATES IN PARTICULAR MAY NOT BENEFIT FROM SUCH AN INCREASE SINCE PEOPLE IN GENERAL HOLD THEM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NATION'S PROBLEMS. PERU'S DECISION NOT TO RETURN A LARGE NUMBER OF REBEL AIR FORCE OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN WHO SOUGHT ASYLUM MAY BE RAISED BY THE GOV IN THE OAS. END SUMMARY.

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3. [REDACTED] BEGAN THE SESSION BY COMMENTING THAT EVERYTHING WAS BACK TO NORMAL IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE AND THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ HAS RESUMED HIS USUAL HECTIC SCHEDULE WHILE BEING PERIODICALLY BRIEFED ON THE LATEST COUP RELATED-INFORMATION. WHILE IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO ACCEPT THE NUMEROUS REQUESTS FOR EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS, CAP WILL MEET AT 0900, DECEMBER 1 WITH FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AND VENEZUELAN REPRESENTATIVES

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OF FOREIGN MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS. [REDACTED] 60 OR MORE TO ATTEND, AND, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AN ATMOSPHERE FOR MORE INFORMAL (BUT PRESUMABLY ON-THE-RECORD) DISCUSSION, [REDACTED] A LUNCH FOR THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE CARACAS HILTON AT NOON. [REDACTED] OF EMPHASIZING HIS UNDERSTANDING OF HOW BADLY VENEZUELA'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE HAD SUFFERED FROM THIS YEAR'S SECOND COUP ATTEMPT AND THE CONSTANT CRITICISM FROM POLITICIANS AND MEDIA COMMENTATORS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. HE WELCOMED EMBASSY SUGGESTIONS ON HOW THE GOV COULD TRY TO "NEUTRALIZE" NEGATIVE FEELING IN THE UNITED STATES. IT WAS AGREED THAT THIS POINT WOULD BE

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	SS-00	STR-17	TRSE-00	T-01	RPE-00	/085W	

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5828  
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USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM IMMEDIATE  
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STATE FOR ARA/AND AND ARA/P  
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TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, VE

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]  
DISCUSSED ON ANOTHER OCCASION.

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4. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION OF HOW LONG SEVERAL  
CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES (BUT PARTICULARLY THOSE  
DEALING WITH FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND FREEDOM OF  
MOVEMENT) WOULD REMAIN IN EFFECT, [REDACTED]

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EXPECTED A GENERAL EASING IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS  
PARTICULARLY ON THE CURFEW BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT  
CONSIDERED IT IMPORTANT TO REASSURE THE POPULACE AND TO  
CREATE THE BEST POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENT FOR DECEMBER 6'S  
MAYORAL AND GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS. FOR SECURITY  
REASONS, LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES MIGHT STILL NEED TO  
DO HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCHES FOR SOME TIME SO THAT MAY BE  
THE LAST CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE WHICH IS FULLY  
RESTORED.

5. VENEZUELAN MEDIA BEHAVIOR: [REDACTED] THAT  
IN GENERAL THE LOCAL MEDIA THUS FAR HAS BEEN REASONABLE  
IN ITS COVERAGE. HE EMPHASIZED (AS HE HAS IN THE PAST  
TO EMBASSY OFFICERS) THAT THE LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM  
AND LEFTIST TENDENCIES AMONG VENEZUELAN REPORTERS WAS  
WORRISOME NOT ONLY TO THE GOV BUT TO THE WELL-EDUCATED  
ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN GENERAL WHO FELT THEY WERE NOT  
BEING ACCURATELY INFORMED. WHEN ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY  
THOUGHT TO SENDING GOVERNMENT CENSORS TO MEDIA  
ORGANIZATIONS AS WAS DONE IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE

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FEBRUARY 4 COUP ATTEMPT, [REDACTED] SHOOK HIS HEAD AND SAID THAT THE GOV HAD LEARNED A PAINFUL LESSON THAT TIME AND IT WOULDN'T BE REPEATED. HE ADDED THAT [REDACTED] HAD ARGUED UNSUCCESSFULLY AGAINST USING CENSORS.

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6. THE ONE ORGANIZATION WHICH IN PARTICULAR HAD UPSET THE GOVERNMENT ON NOVEMBER 27 WAS RADIO RUMBOS WHICH, ACCORDING TO SOME, HAD BROADCAST INFLAMMATORY COMMENTS AND NEWS REPORTS URGING POPULAR SUPPORT OF THE REBELS. A GOVERNMENT POLICE FORCE UNIT FORCIBLY ENTERED THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATION AND APPARENTLY PHYSICALLY BEAT SOME EMPLOYEES AND DESTROYED EQUIPMENT AND OTHER PROPERTY. [REDACTED] THOUGHT THAT POLICE WERE WRONG AND HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN APOLOGIES AND DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RADIO OWNERSHIP. DESPITE RUMORS TO THE CONTRARY, HE SAID THAT THE STATION WILL NOT LOSE ITS BROADCAST LICENSE.  
7. DECEMBER 6 ELECTIONS: [REDACTED] THERE WILL BE A GREATER VOTER TURN-OUT THAN PREVIOUSLY EXPECTED BECAUSE, BASZJQ\$98/-,RWWXOMX6BU\$ #./0,

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(SSAF BY HAVING THEM TRIED IN CIVIL RATHER THAN MILITARY COURTS. THE RESULT IS A SLOW, LENGTHY, UNCERTAIN PROCESS WHICH ADDS TO POLITICAL INSTABILITY. THE DECISION TO HAVE THE NOVEMBER 27 COUP LEADERS TRIED BY MILITARY COURTS WILL RESULT IN SMOOTH, EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE JUSTICE, ZAMBRANO FEELS. HE ADDED THAT BECAUSE THEY WILL CERTAINLY BE PUNISHED THIS WILL BE A DETERRENT TO OTHER MILITARY PERSONNEL CONTEMPLATING A THIRD COUP ATTEMPT.

9. PERU'S DECISION TO GRANT ASYLUM TO AIR FORCE REBELS: [REDACTED] THAT THE GOV'S NEXT STEP WAS TO PURSUE THE MATTER THROUGH THE OAS. HE FELT THAT THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT DECISION WAS A MISTAKE AND WOULD SEND THE WRONG SIGNAL THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA. HE DID NOT HAVE AN OPINION ON HOW THE GOP DECISION MIGHT AFFECT NORMALIZATION OF GOV-GOP RELATIONS.

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[REDACTED]  
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11. COMMENT:

AS THE PRESIDENT ENTERS HIS FINAL YEAR IN OFFICE. WHILE ITS TOO EARLY TO FORECAST WITH CERTAINTY THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOVEMBER 27 ON THE PRESIDENT'S ABILITY TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE HIS TERM, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT FOR NOW AT LEAST THE SECOND COUP ATTEMPT IN A YEAR WILL FOCUS LOCAL AND FOREIGN MEDIA ATTENTION ON VENEZUELA'S INSTABILITY AND INTERNAL DISSENSION.

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12. THE DECEMBER 6 ELECTIONS OFFER MEDIA ANALYSTS THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY TO JUDGE TANGIBLE REACTIONS TO THE HEALTH OF VENEZUELA'S BODY POLITIC. UNLESS THE TURNOUT IS SIZABLE (50 PERCENT OR MORE) AND AD AT LEAST HOLDS ON TO THE MAJOR GOVERNORS' AND MAYORS' OFFICES IT CURRENTLY OCCUPIES, ONE CAN ANTICIPATE FUTURE MEDIA ATTACKS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAP'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. SKOL

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